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BULGARIA'S CASE

A REPLY TO PROFESSOR R. A. TSANOFF¹

By N. J. Cassavety, General Secretary of the Pan-Epirotic Union in America

In the May issue of the *New Europe*, Mr. Mavrocordato, in commenting upon an article written by Mr. Sideris, socialist Greek deputy from Salonica, on Macedonia, makes a remarkable statement. He declares that the Balkan nations are extreme in their nationalistic aspirations, and uncompromising to exasperation. He also says that the writers on the Balkan question, as a rule, have shown as strong a fanaticism for or against this or that Balkan race, as the Balkan peoples themselves.

Any one who has read the literature written on the Balkans during the last fifty years will agree that with very few exceptions the Philhellenes are hopelessly irreconcilable to the Bulgars, and the Philobulgars are unreasonably antagonistic to the Greeks.

The only explanation we venture to give of this warm championship of the one side or the other is the violence of the propaganda which is carried on by both Bulgars and Greeks to influence foreigners in favor of their respective views on Macedonia.

Thus, a foreigner who first visits Greece, is so thoroughly catechized in the Greek version of Macedonia, and in the Greek conception of the "terrible, savage, and brutal Bulgars," that he becomes from there on impermeable by any arguments which tend to alter his Greek opinion of the Bulgars. And likewise, the foreigner who visits Bulgaria first, is so convinced of the total worthlessness of the Greek claims on Macedonia, and of "the brutality, perfidy, barbarity" of the Greeks, that he cannot even bear to listen to the arguments on the other side.

¹ See article, "Bulgaria's Case," by Professor Tsanoff, *JOUR. OF RACE DEVELOPMENT*, Jan., 1918, p. 296.

Of the intensity of the national feeling that races in the veins of the Balkan peoples, and which gives birth to narrow views on their best interests, we cannot help mentioning the article of Professor Tsanoff. The professor has allowed himself to be carried away by his patriotic sentiments and has been unfair to Bulgaria's neighbors, Serbia and Greece.

Of the extreme exposition of the views of Bulgaria and of Greece by Philobulgars or Philhellenes, respectively, we should limit ourselves in citing works which are, strange to say, almost invariably consulted as authorities by most American writers on the Balkans—namely—Professor Monroe's *Bulgaria and Her People* and Mr. Noel H. Brailsford's *Macedonia* on the Bulgarian side, and French articles such as appeared in the *Review des Deux Mondes* in May, 1918, on the Greek side.

To any student of the Balkan question, who is unwilling to choose the course of least resistance by accepting the conflicting statistics, theories, and histories of either the one or the other side of the Balkan disputes, such treatises cannot be of use as a guide in the just appreciation of the respective rights of the claimants of Macedonia.

Professor Monroe's treatise,¹ for instance, will at the very outset warn the fair minded student against acquiescing in his views.

His authorities are Professor Tsanoff, Mr. Kutukchieff and a number of other Bulgarians. And the keynote to his view of the Macedonian question is given in the singular statement, "Bulgaria was betrayed, attacked, and traduced by her treacherous allies." (Introduction, p. VIII.) This statement is made in reference to the war of 1913. So far as we know, only Professor Monroe has advanced this novel version as to the culprits of the second Balkan war. This view, of course, was the initial contention of the Bulgars, until a year later, on the anniversary of the second Balkan war, General Vasoff wrote the following indictment against the Bulgarians for having precipitated the war, which indictment has forced the Bulgarians to admit that they betrayed their allies.

¹ *Bulgaria and Her People*.

The catastrophe of June 29 is the work of a Camarilla which has its network of activities spread through every Bulgar institution. It is our old plague in our governmental organism. It is accustomed to govern without check and without responsibility. It has committed a crime of aberration on June 29, only in order to avoid the arbitration of Russia. Thus has the Balkan Alliance been broken, and Austria escaped the four-headed hydra, by the offering of Bulgaria as an holocaust. God only knows when our people will escape the disgrace to which men without conscience and without honor have condemned it.²

We can thus realize how widely mistaken Professor Monroe is, and how a fair minded judge will be misled in taking such a writer as a reliable authority. Professor Monroe calls all the Greeks "perfidious, and thieves."

Mr. Brailsford, in a less passionate probulgarian style, sees in the Bulgarians the future race of the Balkans, the progressive and amiable, the deserving race; and in the Greeks, a race of degenerates, unfit to hold any equal sway with the Bulgars.

Mr. Domergue, in his extreme Philehellenism, pictures the Bulgars as "barbarians, brutes, ruffians, deprived of the sense of honor and morality." "Only the Greeks are intelligent, honorable, amiable, etc."³

Space, of course, does not permit us to multiply examples of writers who, owing to their fiery attachment to one or the other nationality in the Balkans, are unsafe guides.

When I read Professor Tsanoff's treatise in the *JOURNAL OF RACE DEVELOPMENT* I was not taken by surprise by the intensity of the writer's conviction. The Balkan peoples, unfortunately, seldom see any other point of view except their own, and the Bulgarians, despite their many good qualities, are more perfectly Balkan in respect to this weakness, than any other of the Balkan races. What filled me with astonishment, however, was the attempt of Professor Tsanoff to exonerate, and even to justify Bulgaria for her partnership with Prussia and Turkey, against the democratic nations of the world.

If the Balkan regions claimed by Bulgaria and held by Bulgar troops today are regions inhabited by Bulgarians; if the cultural

² *Mir*, June 29, 1914.

³ *Echo de Paris*, May 1, 1915.

ideals inspiring Bulgaria and her political and economic system are genuinely democratic; if the ethnic unification and the strengthening of Bulgaria are in no sense a triumph of *Drang nach Osten* diplomacy—then America should realize and should openly declare, not only that she has no possible quarrel with Bulgaria, but that the active support of Bulgaria's demands is a logical part of her own war-program.

If Professor Tsanoff can point the truth of these three suppositions, he expects us to believe that,

1. Bulgaria entered the war as an ally of Germany, not because she sympathized with Prussianism, but because German strategy apparently did admit the demands of Bulgaria's own liberating mission.

2. Bulgaria is not a Hohenzollern pawn, nor one with Germany in spirit, nor an outpost of Germany in fact.

3. Bulgaria's war is a Bulgarian war pure and simple, a distinctively Balkan undertaking, aiming to complete the liberation and the unification of the Bulgarian folk.

4. Bulgaria has achieved already in the heart of the Balkans what America is now undertaking to achieve for all Europe: The vindication of the principles of nationality and democracy.

While we challenge the correctness of the evidence adduced by Professor Tsanoff to substantiate the truth of his three suppositions, we feel that our work can be as easily accomplished by relegating the testing of the evidence to a secondary consideration, and by assuming that he has proved the truth of his suppositions to examine whether Bulgaria can be absolved from the sin of having declared war against Humanity and Democracy.

"Bulgaria," pleads Professor Tsanoff, "had claims upon Macedonia. In order to make good those claims she went into alliance with Germany."

There are two alternatives suggested by this contention. Either that Germany is more liberal, more democratic, and more just, and recognized the justice of Bulgaria's claims, while the Allies refused to do so, "apparently;" or, that the Allies have not found her claims just and could not justly yield to her, while unscrupulous Germany consented to sacrifice the rights of other races in order to invite Bulgaria's participation in the struggle.

If the Bulgarian cause was just, if Bulgaria's claims were just, then, the allied Germans are the real champions of liberty and justice, and the Allies and America are on the opposite side of democracy, and freedom of small nationalities.

But, it may be argued that in all other cases the cause of the Allies is just, the cause of Germany unjust; while in the case of Bulgaria, the Allies are unjust, and the Germans just.

Had Bulgaria the faintest love of world liberty and world democracy, it will be readily admitted that she could not have sacrificed the cause of world-democracy, in order to "liberate" a few hundred thousand Bulgar-Macedonians.

It is impossible to conceive of the logic of Professor Tsanoff who insists that Bulgaria is democratic, animated by similar principles as those by which America is animated, and that although she knew that Germany was aiming at the ruin of France, England, Italy and America, she deemed the "liberation" of Macedonia of a more serious concern than the salvation of the democratic countries of the world.

Had Bulgaria been animated solely by a burning desire for the "liberation" of Bulgar folk, we are decidedly certain that she would have trusted in the justice and the fairness of the Allies, and now in the fairness of America to adjudicate to Bulgaria what really belongs to her.

If Bulgaria were animated by the same unselfish motives which made America enter the struggle on the side of the Allies, she would have preferred to suffer at the unfairness of the Allies and of America, rather than assist the most barbarous autocracy to crush the democratic peoples of the earth.

Having shown that Professor Tsanoff's argument attempting to justify Bulgaria's alliance with Prussia will not stand, I shall now endeavor to point out that the three conclusions arrived at by Professor Tsanoff from his three suppositions, are altogether contrary to indisputable facts.

1. "Bulgaria," concludes Professor Tsanoff, "is not a Hohenzollern pawn, nor one with Germany in spirit—nor an outpost of Germany in fact."

Professor Tsanoff finds great pleasure in the enumeration of antiquated lists of references. We will quote not the obscure volumes which are said to be found mostly on the dusty shelves of German libraries, but living, contemporary authorities to prove that Bulgaria is a Hohenzollern pawn, "one with Germany in spirit, an outpost of Germany, in fact;" that Bulgaria did not enter the war as an ally of Germany because Germany admitted Bulgaria's liberating mission, but because Bulgaria is craving after "Balkan hegemony," because she longs to become the Prussia of the Near East, because she was growing mad with the lust of conquest; that Bulgaria did not enter to fight this war as a mere Balkan war, but as a war to crush democracy, and to destroy French culture, British sea power, and Serbian expansion; that Bulgaria has not "liberated" Macedonia, but has massacred the Macedonian inhabitants, annihilated Serbian civil population, and perpetrated acts of extreme violence upon Roumanians and Greeks.

And to prove our points we will refer to the irrefutable testimony of Bulgaria's officials and publicists, as well as to German and Austrian opinions.

We want Macedonia—that is, we don't want it, because we already have it. Our troops are in Macedonia, and we will never again get out of it.⁴

At all costs we must be neighbors with Austria-Hungary. Our friendship has grown during the war, and has become an alliance as solid as rock. Now we can give hands across the Morava Valley. This neighborhood was very necessary for us. Some day we should have to have it. I ask myself how much have the Austro-Bulgar relations suffered by the unfortunate fact that Serbia has come in between us! The way which leads from Bulgaria to Europe is now open. This passage has been secured without the violation of the principle of nationality (?) which the Allies have so insistently put forward. We have been accused by the Allies that we have conscripted from the conquered countries. The conquered lands are Bulgarian. If we have shed our blood to conquer them, it is not in order to leave them alone.⁵

Of course, it is unnecessary to mention here that the lands of which Mr. Radoslavoff speaks as Bulgarian are the

⁴ *Vienne Freie Presse*, June 11, 1917, Premier Radoslavoff

⁵ *Vienne Freie Presse*, June 11, 1917, Premier Radoslavoff.

eastern portion of the Old Kingdom of Serbia, which separated Bulgaria from Austria-Hungary. "These lands are Bulgarian." And so, entire Serbia is Bulgarian. Almost all of the Serbian population has been exterminated, as we shall be told by the Bulgarians themselves.

Commenting on these declarations of Premier Radoslavoff, the official organ of Sofia, *The Echo of Bulgaria* wrote:

The neighborhood of the two countries secured by a common effort against most formidable enemies is a new factor of friendship between the Monarchy and Bulgaria. *Even if the latter had no right over the Valley of Morava, the need of having a free line of communication with the Central Powers would be for her a sufficient reason to claim its possession.*⁶

In Vienna, where the interests of the monarchy in the Balkans have always been well judged, the need of having on the Danube a friendly nation, and consequently, a direct communication with Bulgaria, are the thoughts unanimously agreed upon. *Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria*, subject to most trying privations, hold fast against an ever growing coalition, and it is their adversaries that waste themselves in a struggle as sanguinary as it is vain. Russia is from now on incapable of any serious effort, and there is room to believe that, if the Allies succeed in persuading her to try again, she will experience a fatal disappointment. At any rate, without Russia, the war on the continent is virtually ended.⁷

On July, 1915, General Angeloff issued a pamphlet, *The Hour of Bulgaria*. We quote:

Besides the signal services which Germany renders to us by the destruction of France and Russia, she shows us also the unic way whereby we can realize the *hegemony in the Balkans*. The nation which aspires to hegemony must prepare to fight against all her neighbors. *The German example shows us that we cannot attain to hegemony except by violence. If we do not obtain it, we cannot be the Prussians of the Balkans.*

Here is the greatest ambition of Bulgaria—to become the Prussians of the Balkans. Yet, Mr. Tsanoff very naively insists that Bulgaria's ideals are absolutely like those of America!

On April 11, 1917, the *Bulgarian Press* announced the change of the Bulgarian civil code.

⁶ *The Echo of Bulgaria*, June 14, 1917.

⁷ *The Echo of Bulgaria*, June 14, 1917.

"The necessity of this modification," declared the Bulgarian Minister of Justice, "may be explained by the fact that our existing civil code is a sort of a copy of the French civil code, which is absolutely worthless. We propose to replace *it by the German civil code, which is absolutely perfect*. This transformation will have the advantage of drawing us nearer to the Central Powers."⁸

What Bulgaria longs for is a thorough Prussianisation of her institutions.

P. Oswald, a German publicist writes:

The rôle of Bulgaria in this war has consisted in joining Turkey to Germany. As the word from Hamburg to Bagdad goes through Sofia, and as Bulgaria forms the link between Orient and Occident, she can now profit by her geographical position, and fulfill her destiny in the world.

We have attempted to disprove Professor Tsanoff's contention that Bulgaria entered the war in pursuance of the principle of nationality. We should feel contented with the evidence adduced, and forego the annoyance to our readers of inviting them to go over the three suppositions of Professor Tsanoff.

We have already proved that Bulgaria's institutions are not democratic, and that she is a German tool for the furtherance of the Prussian policy of *Drang Nach Osten*. It remains for us now to examine whether Macedonia occupied now by the Bulgarians is Bulgarian in nationality.

In the first place, it should be necessary for us to define the term *nationality*. What constitutes a *nationality*? And Lord Cromer, in reviewing the excellent work of Arnold Toynbee, *The New Europe*, agrees with Mr. Toynbee's definition: "It is the will to coöperate" and "It is irrespective of language or religion."⁹

A few years ago Mr. Clemenceau issued a pamphlet in which he discussed the question of nationality. He brought forth the same conception as Mr. Toynbee. "No matter what language I speak, if I choose to be a Frenchman, so

⁸ *Mir*, April 11, 1917.

⁹ *The New Europe*, Preface, p. 1.

then, I am a Frenchman," wrote Mr. Clemenceau.¹⁰ This definition found acceptance among the most learned circles of Europe and America. Only Germany and Bulgaria objected to it. Germany could not admit this solution, for, she considers the Flemings, the Dutch, the northern Swiss, the Alsatians and the Lorraineans as Germans, because they speak German,—a quasi-German language. The fact that the Dutch hate the Germans, the fact that the Flemings, the northern Swiss, and the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine object to a union with Germany is of little moment to the Germans. "They are Germans, and if they do not understand that, we will force them to accept our opinion," is the reply of Germany.

Having then, invited our readers' attention to the definitions of nationality as accepted by the democratic nations of the world on the one side, and by Germany and Bulgaria on the other side, we can the more easily perceive the error of the Bulgarophiles who maintain that the largest portion of Macedonia is Bulgarian.

Mr. Ami Boue, one of the authorities cited by Professor Tsanoff, writes that the purely Greek population in Macedonia is more than 300,000 (p. 21, vol. II). He considers that there are over 200,000 Vlacks, and about as many Slav-speaking Greeks.¹¹

Now, not even the most extreme Philobulgars dare deny the existence of a large population in Macedonia which speaks Slav but feels Greek and speaks and prays for Greece.

Nor is there a discrepancy in the works of the writers on the Balkans that the Vlacks, whatever their origin, are strongly attached to the Greek cause. Greece, accepting the principle of nationality as defined by Mr. Clemenceau, Lord Cromer and Mr. Toynbee, considers the Vlacks and the Slavophone Macedonians as Greeks, because they love Greece, and pray for her, and wish to be united to her.

¹⁰ H. N. Brailsford, *Macedonia*, p. 19 and Prof. Spenser Wilkinson, "Types of Political Frontiers," *Royal Geographic Journal*, February, 1915.

¹¹ *Ami Boue La Turquie d'Europe*, p. 21, vol. II.; p. 23, vol. II.

Greece, then, claims that the Greek nationality in Macedonia is 800,000 strong.

Now, according to the best authorities, the total population of Macedonia does not exceed 2,250,000 people. Of these there are Mohammedans 800,000; Greeks (according to the Greek opinion) 800,000, the remainder 650,000 are distributed among the Bulgarians, Serbians, and Jews.

Bulgaria, however, accepts the German definition of *Nationality*. "Those who speak Bulgarian are Bulgarians" maintain the Bulgars. The Macedonians, therefore, who speak Slav, although they are attached to Greece, are Bulgarians. And if they do not understand it, it is the business of the propagandist to tell the Macedonians that they are Bulgarians.

With these antagonistic definitions of nationality, it is not to be wondered that the Bulgar and Greek statistics are at variance, and that the exponents of Bulgarophilism and those of Philhellenism are at odds.

The question resolves itself into the consideration of whether we should accept the German-Bulgarian definition of nationality or the Franco-British one.

If we accept the Bulgar definition, then the Bulgars have the preponderance in Macedonia; then the Flemings, the Dutch, the northern Swiss, and the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine are Germans. If we accept the French opinion, the Slav Macedonians, who love Greece and hate Bulgaria and Serbia, are Greeks, the Flemings are Belgians, the Dutch are not Germans, and the northern Swiss are Swiss, pure and simple, and the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine French.

It is indeed necessary to show where we have derived our figures for the population of Macedonia.

As we have mentioned, we have consulted every authority adduced by Professor Tsanoff such as Brancoff, Brailsford, Boué, Lejean, Pouqueville, and as many as were to be found in our libraries, and our astonishment was most singular at the extraordinary disagreement of these authorities with the statements made by Professor Tsanoff.

Mr. Brailsford, for instance, answers the question of Professor Tsanoff, "What are the Macedonian Slavs, Serbians or Bulgars?" as follows:

"They cannot be said to be Serbians, because they cannot possibly be of pure Slav blood. On the other hand, they cannot be said to be Bulgars, their language is neither Serbian, nor Bulgarian, but Slav." And again, "The Macedonian Slavs have become Bulgars through Bulgar propaganda which was vigorously initiated thirty years in advance of the Serbian or Greek propagandas." "The Macedonians will become as easily Serbians or Greeks as they have become Bulgars." And he mentions that at Monastir he met a wealthy villager, and asked him, "Is your village Greek or Bulgarian?" "It was Greek last year, but now it is Bulgarian," replied the villager. "How is that miracle?" he asked. "Well, we needed a priest. We asked the Greek bishop to give us one. He refused us. The Bulgarians learned about it, and came to us and said that they would give us not only a priest, but also a teacher free of charge. So we became Bulgarians." And Mr. Brailsford says this was a Greek-speaking village:¹²

Mr. Boué, to whom Professor Tsanoff refers us as to his authority, writes:

The Macedonians in northern Macedonia pray for Prince Michael, and look up to Serbia, the Bulgars in Bulgaria to the Emperor of Russia, and the Macedonians in southern Macedonia and Thessaly pray for King Otto of Greece.¹³

And what does Professor Tsanoff answer to that question? "No! absolutely no!" Serbians in Macedonia! Evidently Professor Tsanoff has not gone over his authorities carefully.

But in concluding our reply we would ask Professor Tsanoff if he knows the statistics of the Bulgarian schools in Macedonia, of the Bulgarian bishoprics, and of the Bulgarian representatives to the Turkish parliament in 1908.

The school statistics for Bulgaria were published at Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in 1895, under the supervision of the Bulgarian exarchate.

¹² H. N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, p. 101, 102.

¹³ *Ami Boué, La Turquie d'Europe*, vol. IV, p. 104.

Space does not admit of a detailed table of comparative numbers of schools, teachers, and pupils. We state only that the Greek pupils are some 34,000 more than the Bulgarian pupils in Macedonia. Out of five Christian deputies to the Turkish parliament in 1908, four were Greeks and one Bulgarian.

Out of thirty metropolitan bishoprics in Macedonia, seventeen were Greek in 1908, and only seven Bulgarian.

In fine, it all depends on the point of view one takes of the Macedonian question. Nationality must, after all, be judged according to the will of the people. What matter if I speak Greek, or Bulgarian better than English. So long as I have chosen to join my future with America, to adopt her traditions, to be imbued with her culture, to dream her dreams, to live for her and to die for her, what reasonable man will deny that I am American on the ground that I speak Bulgarian or Greek or Serbian?

In lieu of insisting upon a policy of "all-or-nothing" and of forced Hellenization, Serbization or Bulgarization, we should let the Macedonians choose with whom they wish to find their future. And we, former Bulgars and former Greeks, who have learned the newer meaning of nationality in America, should be freed of that unfortunate jingoism which has so long torn Macedonia with interracial hatreds. We should seek to teach tolerance, understanding, and brotherhood, and help to bring back the Balkan Federation which was so unluckily for humanity dissolved through a mere lust of conquest and a vain and mad longing after hegemony.